

Finance Committee
Minutes of January 14, 2016
FINAL

The Finance Committee met Thursday evening, January 14, 2016, at the Town House Select Board Room, Concord, Massachusetts. Notice of the meeting was duly filed with the Town Clerk, Town of Concord, Massachusetts.

Members present: Richard Giles, Richard Jamison, Paul McGinn, Linda Miller, Pat Nelson, Karle Packard, Scott Randall, Wendy Rovelli, June Rzepczynski, Philip Swain, Tom Tarpey, and Triveni Upadhyay.

Members absent: Terri Ackerman, Daniel Cassidy, and Mark Garvey.

Also present: Ardis Bordman; Robert Grom; Tony Logalbo, Finance Director; and Janet Rothrock, Recorder.

Chair Giles called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and noted that CCTV was not taping and broadcasting this meeting.

1. Approval of Minutes: The Regular Meeting minutes of December 17 were accepted with no edits.

2. Correspondence: Mr. Giles reported that there was an e-mail from Bill Plummer with three attachments about Minuteman Career and Technical High School (MCTHS). He asked Mr. Logalbo to distribute the communication to all members.

3. Chair's Report: Mr. Giles reported on the Select Board meetings of December 4 and 11. These items were discussed:

- Warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting;
- The formation of the Public-Private partnership Committee;
- Several projects that are being proposed to require debt exclusion votes at a ballot vote on April 14th following the conclusion of the April 4th Town Meeting: MCTHS's new building, the high school landfill remediation, and supplemental funding for the school transportation facility at the WR Grace site acquired by the Town last August;
- The Auditor's report to the Select Board on January 11 which reported that the town's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2015 received an unqualified opinion from the external auditor and there were no material findings. The only significant management letter comment was in regard to a recommendation for a separate audit of student activity accounts at the Concord Public School department.

4. Observer Reports:

Schools – Ms. Miller reported that \$1,875,000 is appropriated to date from votes at previous Town Meetings for construction of the school bus depot on the W. R. Grace land, but that a total of \$4,125,000 is needed. The shortfall between the original rough cost estimate and the current estimate based on more developed plans is due to several factors: 1) the need to conform to code requirements not considered when the first cost estimate was made; 2) “soft costs” for design and planning that were not included in the first estimate; 3) construction costs have increased; 4) the depot was originally 4000 square feet and is now planned to be 6000 square feet to provide appropriate room for vehicle maintenance and limited staff facilities such as restrooms.

The Town Public Works department is developing the design as the facility would be constructed under the direction of the Town Manager. The town administration’s opinion is that value engineering would not yield a useable depot and that the \$4,125,000 figure is probably firm. In addition, as water is not available on site it could cost an additional \$250,000 to make it available if the Acton Water system is unwilling to provide a connection from the 37 Knox Trail property.

Some community members suggested that the high school landfill, which will cost about \$1,100,000 to cap, could be used for parking buses.

The School Committee (SC) discussed whether to move ahead with plans to build a bus depot on the W. R. Grace land, knowing that Town Meeting might not vote to approve the additional funds needed for depot construction and decided to ask the Town Manager to proceed with the project because of the tight development timetable and the likelihood that any delays could add to costs.

Ms. Miller also reported on the Concord Teachers Association (CTA) negotiations with the CPS School Committee on a new multi-year contract. There have been 11 sessions since March 2015 and no agreement has been reached. Wage increases for three years of 2%, 2%, and 2% have been discussed over several sessions but working condition matters have not moved forward in bargaining. CPS School Committee thinks a number of these issues should be outside the contract. Teachers have recently appeared with buttons and placards at elementary school pick up times expressing concern over the stalled negotiations. The next negotiation session is January 21. The CTA wants wage parity with the Concord Carlisle Regional School District (CCRSD) bargaining unit but the \$2,000,000 gap appears to be too wide to be bridged in one contract period. Mr. Swain reported that teachers feel there has been a lack of respect and trust for several years between the school administration and the CTA. Working conditions, not money, is the sticking point, specifically control over assessment and evaluation, voice, and the teaching and learning environment.

Junction Village Funding Advisory Committee – Ms. Nelson reported that the builder needs a commitment of \$3,000,000 in local funds from Concord to proceed with the proposed elderly assisted living project, a project being managed by the Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC). The project is attractive to Concord because it would likely increase the percent of affordable housing over the required 10%

threshold through 2030 without placing a burden on the schools and with a negligible increase in traffic. Possible sources for the \$3,000,000 include: Community Preservation Act funds, in-kind services for utilities (the site has no utilities and that has made the project more expensive than usual), Free Cash appropriation by Town Meeting, fundraising, grants, and the CHDC itself.

Note: The CHDC was created pursuant to a Home Rule petition voted by the Concord Town Meeting in 2005 and enacted by the legislature as Chapter 275 of the Acts of 2006. It is modeled after a similar public corporation long operating in Cambridge. While its board members are appointed by the Concord Selectmen, it is not a committee of the Town. Its board does not report to the selectmen. It has considerable enumerated powers and is a 510c3 non-profit independent developer of affordable housing. The enabling statute allows the town to make appropriations to benefit the CHDC. However, to date, except for several CPA appropriations for specific purposes, no tax-supported funding of the CHDC has occurred .

Concord Municipal Light Plant – Ms. Rzepczynski reported that the CMLP Board has adopted a 2016 calendar year budget and it has been submitted to the Town Manager. It will be reviewed publicly at the February 29th public hearing.

5. Update on Five-Year forecast: Ms. Rovelli presented the new Five-Year forecast and reviewed the assumptions used to make the forecast. There are three scenarios: most likely, low growth, and high growth. Under the most likely scenario, the unused capacity within the levy limit would be \$3,500,000 in FY18 and would decline to \$2,500,000 by FY22.

6. Warrant Article Review and assignments: Committee members were assigned to research as needed and serve as resources for the various Town Meeting articles. Members would not necessarily need to speak on their assigned articles at Town Meeting.

Special Town Meeting of February 4, 2016

Article 1, Amendments to the Regional School District Agreement of the Minuteman Regional Vocational School District – Mr. Cassidy/Ms. Nelson

Article 2, Authorize Long Term Lease for Nagog Pond Ground-Mounted and Rooftop Solar Panels – Ms. Rzepczynski

Annual Town Meeting, April 4, 2016

Article 3, Meeting Procedure – Mr. Giles

Article 4, Ratify Personnel Board Classification Actions – Mr. Randall

Article 5, Personnel Bylaw Amendments – Mr. Randall

Article 6, Classification & Compensation Plan for Regular-Status Positions – Mr. Randall

Article 7, Town Budget – Mr. Giles

Article 8, Home Rule Petition to Establish a Concord Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Exemption – Mr. Cassidy/Mr. Upadhyay

Article 9, Close Elementary School Debt Stabilization Fund – Ms. Rovelli

Article 10, PEG Access and Cable-Related Fund - Ms. Rovelli

Article 11, Public School Budget – Ms. Ackerman/Ms. Miller/Mr. Swain

Article 12, Concord Public School Renovations – Ms. Ackerman/Ms. Miller/Mr. Swain

Article 13, Concord-Carlisle Regional High School Budget - Ms. Ackerman/Ms. Miller/Mr. Swain

Article 14, Concord-Carlisle Regional School District – Landfill Remediation - Ms. Ackerman/Ms. Miller/Mr. Swain

Article 15, School Transportation Facility – Supplemental Appropriation - Ms. Ackerman/Ms. Miller/Mr. Swain

Article 16, By Petition – Reconsidering the School Bus Terminal Location - Ms. Ackerman/Ms. Miller/Mr. Swain

Article 17, Minuteman Regional Technical High School District Budget- Mr. Cassidy/Ms. Nelson

Article 18 Minuteman Building Project Approval - Mr. Giles

Article 19, Free Cash Use - Mr. Giles

Article 20, Community Preservation Committee Appropriation Recommendations – Ms. Ackerman

Article 21, Outdoor Recreation Facilities – Emerson Track – Mr. McGinn

Article 22, Municipal Building Renovations – Ms. Rovelli

Article 23, Land Acquisition – Ball’s Hill Road – Ms. Nelson

Article 24, Public Safety Equipment - Ms. Nelson

Article 25, Cemetery Roadway Infrastructure and Drainage Improvements – Ms. Ackerman

Article 26, 2016 Road Program – Mr. Upadhyay

Article 27, Road Repair Revolving Fund Expenditures - Mr. Upadhyay

Article 28, Nagog Pond Water Treatment Facility, Intake Piping and Reservoir Improvements - Mr. Upadhyay

Article 29, By Petition – Removal of Parking Meters - Mr. Packard

Article 30, By Petition – Snow Removal from Sidewalks - Mr. Packard

Article 31, Regional Housing Services Revolving Fund Expenditures – Ms. Nelson

Article 32, Demolition Review Bylaw – Ms. Rovelli

Article 33, Historic Districts Map Amendment – Hubbardville District — Ms. Rovelli

Article 34, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Combined Business/Residence - Ms. Rovelli

Article 35, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Residential Uses - Ms. Rovelli

Article 36, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Planned Residential Development Diversity of Dwelling Units - Ms. Rovelli

Article 37, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Site Plan Review for Religious Uses, Educational Uses and Child Care Facilities - Ms. Rovelli

Article 38, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Flood Plain Conservancy District Boundary- Ms. Rovelli

Article 39, Zoning Bylaw Amendment - Flood Plain Conservancy District - Ms. Rovelli

Article 40, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Agricultural Uses - Ms. Rovelli

Article 41, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Limited Business District #2 Principal Use Regulations, Combined Business/Residence & Dimensional Regulations - Ms. Rovelli

Article 42, Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Dimensional Regulations, Residence Districts Maximum Floor Area Ratio & Nonconforming Single and Two-Family Residence Structures - Ms. Rovelli

Article 43, Sign Bylaw Amendments – Mr. Giles

Article 44, By Petition – Request to Create a Concord Municipal Light Board Advisory Committee to Analyze Benefits and Requirements to Implement a Single Revenue Decoupled Time-of-Use Rate Structure – Ms. Rzepczynski

Article 45, By Petition – Bylaw Prohibiting Polystyrene in Food Service Ware – Mr. Giles

Article 46, By Petition – Request to Create a Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions Goal, Task Force, Funding & Plan – Mr. Tarpey

Article 47, By Petition – Three-Year Moratorium on the Installation of Synthetic Turf on Town Land – Mr. McGinn

Article 48, By Petition – Work to Reduce the Sale and Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Mr. Giles

Article 49, Unpaid Bills – Mr. Giles

Article 50, Debt Rescission – Mr. Giles

Article 51, Light Plant Expenditures & Payment in Lieu of Taxes – Ms. Rzepczynski

Article 52, Solid Waste Disposal Fund Expenditures – Mr. Upadhyay

Article 53, Sewer System Expenditures – Mr. Upadhyay

Article 54, Sewer Improvement Fund Expenditures – Mr. Upadhyay

Article 55, Water System Expenditures – Mr. Upadhyay

Article 56, Beede Swim & Fitness Center Enterprise Fund Expenditures – Mr. McGinn

Article 57, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail – Phase 2B – Mr. Jamison

Article 58, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Right of Way – Mr. Jamison

Article 59, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Easements Over Town Land – Mr. Jamison

7. Finance Director's Report:

Mr. Logalbo reminded the FC that the public hearings start at 7:00 pm and that the Finance Committee Report will be produced on a tighter schedule this year because Town Meeting is earlier. He asked that observer reports be submitted to the Chair by February 5.

Mr. Giles listed the reports included last year and suggested the same ones be written this year: Assessors, Council on Aging, CPS and CCRSD, Minuteman Career and Technical High School, Public Safety, Retirement Board, and Tax Fairness Committee.

Mr. Logalbo also reported that new parking rates and fines have gone into effect as of January 11th. There are about 240 parking meters in Concord Center and West Concord. The Town Manager is planning to replace these meters with meters that can accommodate additional payment options including credit card and pay-by-phone. On February 10th, the pay-by-phone service will be initiated at the West Concord commuter lot, although the “honor box” now in use will remain for some time.

7. Citizen comments: Ms. Bordman said she liked the column Ms. Rovelli wrote for the Concord Journal last year that was printed just before Town Meeting explaining the need to keep tax increases at a sustainable level. Ms. Bordman asked that a similar article be written this year.

There being no questions or comments the meeting was adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karle Packard, Clerk

Documents consulted or reviewed at the meeting:

Concord Finance Committee, FY17 Five-Year Projection of Real Estate Taxes:
1st draft, January 14, 2016

Warrant for Town Meeting, Monday, April 4, 2016

Town of Concord, Finance Committee, Public Hearing Notice, FY 2017 Budget Plans
(July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017)